



**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

**Bureau of Labor Statistics**

**Proposed Collection; Comment Request**

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a pre-clearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA95) [44 U.S.C. 3506(c) (2)(A)]. This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is soliciting comments concerning the proposed revision of the "Current Population Survey (CPS)." A copy of the proposed information collection request (ICR) can be obtained by contacting the individual listed below in the Addresses section of this notice.

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted to the office listed in the Addresses section below on or before (*INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER*).

**ADDRESSES:** Send comments to Carol Rowan, BLS Clearance Officer, Division of Management Systems, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Room 4080, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20212. Written comments also may be transmitted by fax to 202-691-5111 (this is not a toll-free number).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Carol Rowan, BLS Clearance Officer, 202-691-7628 (this is not a toll free number). (See Addresses section.)

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**I. Background**

The CPS has been the principal source of the official Government statistics on employment and unemployment for over 70 years. The labor force information gathered through the survey is of paramount importance in keeping track of the economic health of the Nation. The survey is the only source of monthly data on total employment and unemployment. The Employment Situation news release contains data from this survey and is designated as a Principal Federal Economic Indicator (PFEI). Moreover, the survey also yields data on the characteristics of persons not in the labor force. The CPS data are used monthly, in conjunction with data from other sources, to analyze the extent to which, and with what success, the various components of the American population are participating in the economic life of the Nation.

The labor force data gathered through the CPS are provided to users in the greatest detail possible, in conjunction with the demographic information obtained in the survey. In brief, the labor force data can be broken down by sex, age, race, ethnicity, marital status, family composition, educational level, disability status, and other characteristics. Through such breakdowns, one can focus on the employment situation of specific population groups as well as on general trends in employment and unemployment. Information of this type can be obtained only through demographically oriented surveys such as the CPS.

The basic CPS data also are used as an important platform on which to base the data derived from the various supplemental questions that are administered in conjunction with the survey. By coupling the basic data from the monthly survey with the special data from the supplements, one can get valuable insights on the behavior of American workers and on the social and economic health of their families.

There is wide interest in the monthly CPS data among Government policymakers, legislators, economists, the media, and the general public. While the data from the CPS are used in conjunction with data from other surveys in assessing the economic health of the Nation, they are unique in various ways. Specifically, they are the basis for much of the monthly Employment Situation report, a PFEI. They provide a monthly,

nationally representative measure of total employment, including farm work, self-employment, and unpaid family work; other surveys are generally restricted to the nonagricultural wage and salary sector, or provide less timely information. The CPS provides data on all job seekers, and on all persons outside the labor force, while payroll-based surveys cannot, by definition, cover these sectors of the population. Finally, the CPS data on employment, unemployment, and on persons not in the labor force can be linked to the demographic characteristics of the many groups that make up the Nation's population, while the data from most other surveys are devoid of demographic information. Many groups, both in the government and in the private sector, are eager to analyze this wealth of demographic and labor force data.

## **II. Current Action**

Office of Management and Budget clearance is being sought for the Current Population Survey (CPS). A revision of a currently approved collection is needed to provide the Nation with timely information about the labor force status of the population. The CPS questionnaire has been revised to add three questions on certification/licensure and remove three questions on educational attainment to avoid increasing the cost of the CPS and to limit the increase in respondent burden. These proposed changes would be permanent changes to the survey.

Certification/licensure is a topic that aligns closely with the CPS goal of collecting information about factors that impact

labor market success, and it is a topic of interest to researchers and policy makers. The three additional questions will identify whether respondents have a currently active professional certification or license; whether any of those credentials were issued by the Federal, State, or local government; and whether the credential is required for an individual's main job.

The three educational attainment items that are proposed for removal were added in 1996 to enable researchers to construct a measure of continuous years of education. (There were seven educational attainment questions on the 2014 CPS, and the main educational attainment question, which is widely used, would remain.) All three of the questions proposed for elimination are about graduate education--specifically, whether individuals have taken any graduate or professional school courses since completing a bachelor's degree, whether they'd completed six or more courses, and whether their master's degree program was a 1-year, 2-year, or 3-year program. After conducting a literature search and consulting with stakeholders, BLS determined that these questions are rarely used.

### **III. Desired Focus of Comments**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the

agency, including whether the information will have practical utility.

- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used.
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected.
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

*Type of Review:* Revision of a currently approved collection.

*Agency:* Bureau of Labor Statistics.

*Title:* Current Population Survey (CPS).

*OMB Number:* 1220-0100.

*Affected Public:* Households.

*Total Respondents:* 55,000 per month.

*Frequency:* Monthly.

*Total Responses:* 660,000.

*Average Time Per Response:* 7.6 minutes.

*Estimated Total Burden Hours:* 83,600 hours.

*Total Burden Cost (capital/startup):* \$0.

*Total Burden Cost (operating/maintenance):* \$0.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval of the information collection request; they also will become a matter of public record.

Signed at Washington, D.C., this 11th day of July, 2014.

**Kimberley Hill,**

Chief, Division of Management Systems, Bureau of Labor  
Statistics.

4510-24-P

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